

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Specification

The specification has been amended to place it in better form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claims Status

Claims 8, 10 through 13, 15, and 16 remain pending in the application. Claims 1 through 7, 9, 14, and 17 have been canceled. Claims 8, 10, 12, 13, and 15 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added. Claims 8 and 15 are the only independent claims pending in the application.

Claim Objections

Claims 1 and 8 are objected to because of the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Claim 1 has been canceled, and Claim 8 has been amended *inter alia* to overcome the grounds of the objection. It is respectfully requested that the objections have been overcome.

Art Rejections

Claims 1 through 3 and 8 through 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,994,853 (Fukuchi, et al.).

Claims 4 through 7 and 11 through 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukuchi, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,229,821 (Fujii).

Claims 15 through 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukuchi, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,575,139 (Nuzum).

The rationale underlying each of the foregoing rejections is succinctly set forth in the Official Action.

Response to Art Rejections

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Amended independent Claim 8 calls for an image forming apparatus that includes a movable image bearing member on which an electrostatic image is to be formed; a first developer carrying member, which forms a first developing area in cooperation with the image bearing member, for carrying a developer; a first regulating member, disposed on an end of a longitudinal direction of the first developer carrying member, for regulating a gap between the image bearing member and the first developer carrying member with the first regulating member abutting against the image bearing member; a second developer carrying member, which forms a second developing area downstream of the first developing area in a movement direction of a surface of the image bearing member, for carrying a developer; and a second regulating member, disposed on an end of a longitudinal direction of the second developer carrying member on a side on which the first regulating member is disposed, for regulating a gap between the image bearing member and the second developer carrying member with the second regulating member abutting against the image bearing member. The second regulating member abuts against an area of the image bearing member different from an abutment area of the first regulating member in a width direction orthogonal to the movement direction of the surface of the image bearing member.

According to the claimed invention, it is possible to effectively prevent an image bearing member from being locally, excessively abraded. If a first regulating member and a second regulating member both abutting against the image bearing member overlap with each other in a width direction of the image bearing member, the problem of local, excessive abrasion is likely to occur.

Claim 8 recites a feature that “said second regulating member abuts against an area of said image bearing member different from an abutment area of said first regulating member in a width direction orthogonal to the movement direction of the surface of said image bearing member.” Accordingly, the claimed invention solves the above-mentioned problem associated with overlapping regulating members.

The Examiner takes a position that a guide member 39 of Fukuchi, et al. can be “a first regulating member” and “a second regulating member”. The guide member 39 is provided on the bottom of each of the developing devices (31X, 31Y, 31Z). The guide members 39 are not disposed on an end of a longitudinal direction of a developer bearing member as the first and second regulating members of the claimed invention. Furthermore, the guide members 39 do not abut against a photoreceptor drum 30. Accordingly, Fukuchi, et al. does not disclose the above-noted claimed feature.

Furthermore, Fukuchi, et al. does not disclose or suggest the problem of local, excessive abrasion associated with overlapping abutment areas. *A fortiori*, Fukuchi, et al. does not disclose or suggest a solution to solve this problem.

According to the invention of amended independent Claim 15, a first developer carrying member and a second developer carrying member are disposed to abut against an image charging member with a gap therebetween, which is stably maintained with high

accuracy to regulate a layer thickness of a developer on the second developer carrying member in a developing device. This advantage is accomplished by a claimed feature of “a rocking member rockable about a rotating center of said first developer carrying member as a rocking center, for supporting said second developer carrying member.” When two developer carrying members each having a pair of regulating members abutting against an image bearing member on both ends thereof are fixed to a developer container, it is difficult to make the four regulating members correctively abut against the image bearing member. According to the claimed rocking member feature, all regulating members securely and accurately abut against the image bearing member. Consequently, a distance between the first developer carrying member and the second developer carrying member is constantly maintained so that the layer thickness of the developer on the second developer carrying member is stabilized.

As above-noted with respect to Claim 1, Fukuchi, et al. does not disclose first and second regulating members as recited in Claim 15. In addition, Fukuchi, et al. does not disclose the claimed rocking member.

Fujii and Nuzum are merely cited for showing features recited in certain dependent claims.

Specifically, Nuzum is cited for disclosing a gating apparatus for electrostatic printing machines, and Fujii is cited for disclosing features relating to a developing roller.

Applicant notes that Nuzum discloses that a magnet 46 disposed in a cylinder 41 is rotated by a rocking operation of rocker arm 67. However, the magnet 46 does not correspond to the claimed developer carrying member. Also, the rocker arm 67 performs a rocking operation about a pin 68 as a rocking center. Thus, the rocker arm 67 is readily

distinguishable from the claimed rocking member, which is rockable about a rotating center of a first developer carrying member as a rocking center, for supporting the second developer carrying member as recited in Claim 15.

It is respectfully submitted that Fujii and Nuzum do not remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Fukuchi, et al.

It is also respectfully submitted that the combination rejections are not well founded. The Examiner has provided a *rationalization* for combining the teachings of the cited art based on the benefits of doing so. A combination rejection is proper only when there is some suggestion or motivation in the cited art *per se* to cause one having ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of the cited art. There is nothing in the cited art which supports the position that it can be combined in the manner suggested. Even if the art could be so combined, the mere fact that the art can be combined is not sufficient if there is no suggestions in the art that such a combination is desirable. For example, see ACS Hospital Systems, Inc. v. Montefiore Hospital, 221 U.S.P.Q. 929, 933 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 8 are allowable over Fukuchi, et al., Fujii, and Nuzum whether taken individually or in combination.

Dependent Claims

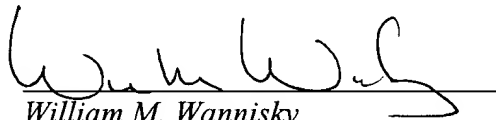
Claims 10 through 13 and 16 depend either directly or indirectly from one of Claims 8 and 15 and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining Applicant's invention. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Closing Comments

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application are earnestly solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our New York office at the address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William M. Wannisky', written over a horizontal line.

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